

A

SUMMARY VIEW

OF THE

SLAVE TRADE

WITH

AN ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

ON THE UTILITY OF REFRAINING FROM

THE USE OF

WEST INDIA SUGAR and RUM.

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The Sixth Edition, corrected.

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# A SUMMARY VIEW OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

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## *I. Slaves are acquired by Means of War.*

### OBSERVATION.

THESE wars are, for the most part, entered into by the parties concerned, without any previous injury on either side, and for no other motive, than to furnish slaves for the Europeans, by whom they have been supplied with arms and ammunition, and frequently bribed, for the purpose. During some of these wars, the victors have been so incensed at the resistance they have found, that their spirit of vengeance has entirely prevailed over their avarice, and, though they have engaged in the conflict for the express purpose of procuring slaves, they have been known to murder every individual, without discrimination either of age or sex.

## *II. Slaves are acquired in Consequence of Crimes.*

OBSERVATION.—Before the slave-trade commenced, criminals were punished in Africa, much in the same manner as those among other nations in the same stage of society; but since the introduction of this trade, all crimes have been punished with slavery. Every artifice has been used by the prince to entice the subject to become a criminal. Acts, formerly esteemed innocent, have been deemed crimes, for the sake of inflicting the punishment. New distinctions have also been made in crimes, that additional punishments

ments might succeed. The offender, in one instance, forfeits his own freedom; in a second, that of the male part of his family, together with his own: in a third, the whole family suffer; and, in a fourth, the relations of the offender as far as they can be traced. And thus many thousands of innocent persons have been consigned to slavery.

III. *Slaves are acquired by Virtue of the Right of Empire in the Prince.*

**OBSERVATION.**—The prince considers his villages, as so many parks or reservoirs, stocked for his own luxury and use. When the black-broker tempts him with his merchandize, and crimes and war have not furnished him with a number adequate to the demand, he seizes certain villagers, who are put into chains, and led, whole families together, to the ships.

This is particularly the case with the King of Dahomy, who rules his subjects with such despotic sway, as to apprehend no resistance, on their part, to his measures.

However, in other parts of the country, the mode of seizing them is a little varied. The king goes with his guards to one of his villages in the night; he surrounds it, and sets it on fire; the poor villagers, flying in consternation from the flames, fall into the hands of their tyrant. This mode, therefore, differs from the former in this respect only, that many are terribly burnt on the occasion, and others perish.

IV. *Slaves are acquired by Kidnapping.*

**OBSERVATION.**—Slave-hunters, consisting of the natives, are employed in the inland country to kidnap the unwary. They lie in wait frequently in the rice-fields, to carry off all such as may be stationed there for the purpose of driving the birds from the grain. They lie in wait also at the springs of water, to which the natives resort

of creeks, to fall upon those solitary beings, who fish there either for amusement or for food: but their principal station is in the long grass, by the side of particular path-ways, which are cut from one village to another, from which they spring out upon their prey, and secure it.

But the natives are not the only people concerned in these iniquitous practices. The British traders have enticed the natives to the shore for the purposes of trade; they have tempted them there with their biscuits, brandy, and other spirits; and, having made them intoxicated, they have forced them on board, and sailed off with them to the Colonies.

These are the various methods by which slaves have been usually obtained; and so successful have these practices been, that *many millions* of people, since the introduction of the trade, have been actually put on board European ships, and consigned to slavery.

Many of the slaves, acquired by these methods, have been brought 1200 miles from the inland country, and have been obliged to pass through inhospitable woods and deserts, where *thousands* of them have died through fatigue and thirst.

The annual exportation from Africa, consists of about *one hundred thousand* people. Of these, more than 20,000 die on their voyage, from close confinement and other causes, and at least that number in the seasoning; so that if to these we add the number that die in the different wars, and those that perish in the long and fatiguing march before described, it will appear that about *an hundred thousand* are *annually* murdered, even before the planter can say he has any additional stock for his plantation.

Of those that survive the voyage and seasoning, it may be said, that being subjected in many instances to the most cruel and despotic treatment, they perish in a few years; and scarcely a vessel is to be found, that an hundredth part of this immense

the enslaved upon the coast.

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AN ADDRESS  
TO THE  
PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,  
On the Utility of Refraining from the Use of  
WEST INDIA SUGAR and RUM.

**N**Otwithstanding the late determination of the House of Commons on the Slave-Trade, we may hope that the discussion it has received will not be useless; and that the public attention has not been excited in vain, to a system of cruelty which it is painful even to recite. It may be hoped that claiming for ourselves the most perfect freedom, we shall no longer impose upon others a slavery the most oppressive; and that, enjoying a degree of felicity unequalled in any age or country, we shall cease to range the world to increase the misery of mankind.

The lust of power, and the pride of conquest, have doubtless produced instances far too numerous of man enslaved by man. But we, in an enlightened age, have greatly surpassed, in brutality and injustice, the most ignorant and barbarous ages: and while we are pretending to the finest feelings of humanity, are exercising unprecedented cruelty. We have planted slavery in the rank soil of sordid avarice; and the produce has been misery in the extreme. We have ascertained, by a course of experiments in cruelty, the least portion of nourishment requisite to enable man to linger a few years in misery; the greatest quantity of labour, which in such a situation, the extreme of punishment can extort; and the utmost degree of pain, labour, and hunger united, the human frame can endure, without terminating its existence.

In vain have such scenes been developed. The wealth derived from the horrid traffic, has created an influence that secures its continuance; unless the people at large shall sap its foundation, by refusing to receive the produce of robbery and murder. The Legislature having refused to interpose, the people are now necessarily called on either to reprobate or approve the measure; for West Indian Slavery must depend upon their support for its existence, and it is in the power of every individual to increase, or to diminish its extent. The laws of our country may indeed prohibit us the sugarcane, unless we will receive it through the medium of slavery. They may hold it to our lips, steeped in the blood of our fellow-creatures; but they cannot compel us to accept the loathsome portion. With us it rests, either to receive it and be partners in the crime, or to exonerate ourselves from guilt, by spurning from us the proffered temptation. For let us not think, that the crime rests alone with those that conduct the traffic, or the legislature by whom it is protected: if we purchase the commodity we participate in the crime. The slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave-driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity. For by holding out the temptation he is the original cause, the first mover in the horrid process; and every distinction is done away by the moral maxim, That whatever we do by another, we do ourselves.

As neither the slave-dealer, nor the planter, can have any moral right to the person of him they stile their slave, to his labour, or to the produce of it; so they can convey no right in that produce to us; and whatever number of hands it may pass through, if the criminal circumstances appertaining to it were known to them at the time of the transfer, they can only have a criminal possession;

and the money paid, either for the slave, or for the produce of his labour, is paid to obtain that criminal possession; and can confer no moral right whatever. So if the death of a person called a slave, be occasioned by the criminal possession, the criminal possessor is guilty of murder; and we, who have knowingly done any act which might occasion his being in that situation, are accessaries to the murder before the fact; as by receiving the produce of his labour, we are accessaries to the robbery, after the fact.

If we as individuals concerned in the Slave Trade (either by procuring the Slaves---compelling them to labour---or receiving the produce) imagine that our share in the transaction is so minute that it cannot perceptibly increase the injury; let us recollect that tho' numbers partaking of a crime may diminish the shame, they cannot diminish its turpitude. Can we suppose that an injury of enormous magnitude can take place, and the criminality be destroyed merely by the criminals becoming so numerous as to render their respective shares indistinguishable. Were an hundred assassins to plunge their daggers into their victim, tho' each might plead that without his assistance the crime would have been completed, and that his point neither occasioned nor accelerated the murder, yet would every one of them be guilty of the intire crime. For into how many soever parts a criminal action may be divided, the crime itself rests intire and complete on every perpetrator.

But in this case we are by no means warranted to consider our individual share in a trivial point of view. The consumption of sugar in this country is so immense, that the quantity commonly used by individuals will have an important effect. A family that uses 5lb. of sugar *per week*, with the proportion of rum, will by abstaining from the consumption 21 months, prevent the slavery or murder

of a fellow-creature; eight such families in 1751 years, prevent the slavery or murder of 100, and 38,000 totally prevent the Slave Trade, for the supply of our islands. Nay, so necessarily connected is our consumption of the commodity, and the misery resulting from it, that in every pound of sugar used, we may be considered as consuming six ounces of human flesh, besides the immense number of sea-men destroyed by the pestiferous contagion of the slave ships, and the inconceivable anguish and misery that must result from parents being torn from their families, and children from their parents, villages burnt, and continual suspicion, terror and dismay, spread thro' the country. A French writer justly observes, " That he cannot look on a piece of sugar without conceiving it stained with spots of human blood : " And Dr. Franklin very properly adds, " that had he taken in all the consequences, he might have seen the sugar not merely spotted, but dy'd in grain with blood." Dreadful consideration that our increasing happiness and prosperity has spread desolation and misery over a country as large as all Europe: For it is an indisputable fact, that it is British luxury the African Slave Trade depends on for support; they have increased, and they would fall together.---Our consumption of sugar is now so immense, that it nearly equals the consumption of all Europe besides; and Jamaica now supplies more sugar than all our West India Islands did at any period prior to 1755.

To form new plantations for the supply of our increasing luxury, the wretched Africans are torn from their native land: and extensive as is the increase of the culture, so far is it from keeping pace with our luxury, that (before the disturbances in the French Islands, within these two or three years) sugars have ever sold in the British market 20 or 30, sometimes 50 *per cent.* dearer than in any



Let us then imagine our immense consumption wholly, or in great part to cease, and our sugars to be thrown on the foreign markets; would additional slaves be wanted to supply an overflowing market at a falling price? The African Slave Trade, by whomsoever conducted, to supply sugar colonies by whatsoever nation possessed, must totally cease. Horror and dismay would give place to peace and civilization, thro' a coast of above three thousand miles extent, and above a thousand miles in land; for so extensive are our depredations, and so extensive are the benefits which it is in our power to confer. Nor would they cease, even here. The West India islands, finding less demand for sugar, must appropriate less ground for the sugar cane, and leave more for provisions; the slaves would be less worked, better fed, and in a few years consist entirely of native creoles. Or if the planters appropriate the land to the other productions of the islands, the same beneficial effects must ensue; for Mr. Cooke tells us, "the cultivation of cotton, pimento, and coffee, is easier than sugar: the slaves look better, and increase faster;" and instead of requiring additional slaves, they will be able to increase their plantations with those already in the islands; as Governor Parry tells us, "one acre of sugar requires as much labour as three of cotton." Thus our refraining from the consumption of the sugar cane even for a few years, would destroy the slave trade to the West India islands; bring fresh land into culture, and place the slaves in those islands in such situation that they must rapidly increase.

The diminution of the consumption of West India produce, would also have a powerful effect by sinking the price of the commodity; and thereby take away the temptation to import additional slaves. The effect a small variation in the supply or demand has on the price, we have recently experienced. The small interruption of the supply on the conti-

nent, by the disturbances in the French sugar islands  
 has suddenly raised some of the markets, which  
 were 20 or 30 *per cent.* lower than the British,  
 much above it; and thereby occasioned an exporta-  
 tion from this country to supply the deficiency:  
 and our exportation, though only amounting to a  
 sixth of our importation, has raised our sugars 50  
*per cent.* and as a fall in the price would obstruct  
 the slave trade, and meliorate the condition of the  
 slaves; so this rise will produce effects the most  
 baneful. The planter, tempted by the high price  
 to get sugar and rum to market while that high  
 price continues, will deprive his slaves of their pro-  
 vision grounds, to plant them with canes; and by  
 the energy of the whip, they will be forced to the  
 most extreme exertions. The murder, or, in the  
 technical language of the West Indies, the *loss* of  
 his slaves, will be to him but a secondary consid-  
 ration. The large crop and the high price will amply  
 compensate him, and the question now is, not mere-  
 ly whether we shall hold out to him an inducement  
 to purchase additional slaves; but whether we shall  
 tempt him to murder those he already has. We can  
 hardly doubt but that West Indian packets have alrea-  
 dy borne the murderous dispatches, expressed in lan-  
 guage too dreadfully explicit, we may nearly suppose  
 the contents. "The price of sugar and rum still  
 continues high. You must adopt every mode to  
 forward as large a cargo as possible. A fortunate  
 crisis now offers itself for extricating my estate  
 from the difficulties in which it is involved.  
 We must avail ourselves of it; another may never  
 occur. Consequences, tho' disagreeable, must at  
 the present moment be overlooked. The slave  
 market is still open for a supply. *New-fangled  
 humanity is no more.*" The day hardly dawns when  
 the whip resounds through those regions of horror;  
 nor ceases, till darkness closes the scene, which day  
 after day is renewed. The miserable victims, desti-

tate of every source of comfort to body or to mind, and sinking under the three endemic diseases of our islands, hunger, torture, and extreme labour, and urged to exertions they are unable to sustain, at length expire beneath the lash, which in vain endeavour to rouse them to a renewal of their labour.

After the important considerations adduced, it might be reckoned, a degradation of the subject to mention the national dignity ; or even *that* might induce us to counteract a powerful body of men, who are equally trampling under foot, the dictates of humanity, and the authority and interest of the nation.

Men, who by enjoying a monopoly of the British market, have in 50 years, received for sugar alone, above 70 millions more than it would have cost at any other market. And from Mr. Botham's evidence it appears, that in Batavia, where labour is as high as in England, sugar equal to the best West India, is sold at 1d.  $\frac{1}{2}$  per pound. These are the men, who have the audacity to oppose a plan for supplying us with sugars, without violating justice; and are purchasing shares in the company, in order to defeat its purpose. These are the men, who declare " That the British legislature cannot abolish the slave trade; for that if we refuse to furnish them with slaves, they will obtain a supply through other channels. A language adopted by a governor of Barbadoes, who admonishes us, " From policy to leave the Islands, to the quiet management of their own affairs." They have it seems been taught, that we have no right to controul them ; that the acts of their assemblies alone are obligatory ; and that those of British legislators, are binding only on those whom they represent. The right of enslaving others, they contend for, as the most valuable of their privileges.

Thus it appears that the legislature is not only unwilling, but perhaps unable, to grant redress ;

and therefore it is more peculiar incumbent on us; *To abstain from the use of sugar and rum, until our West India Planters themselves have prohibited the importation of additional slaves, and commenced as speedy and effectual a subversion of slavery in their islands, as the circumstances, and situation of the slaves will admit; or till we can obtain the produce of the sugar cane in some other mode, unconnected with slavery, and unpolluted with blood.*

For though the African slave trade, be the most prominent feature in this mass of wickedness; yet it is but a feature; and were it abolished, the West India slavery would still exist. Our planters would breed; instead of import slaves, and shall we suffer half a million of fellow subjects, and their posterity, to be held in slavery for ever? I say fellow subjects, for undoubtedly, every person born in the dominions of Great Britain, is a subject bound to obey, and intitled to the protection of the common law of England; and in opposition to which, the acts of assemblies, can be of no authority.

In demanding their liberty for the persons called slaves in our islands; we demand no more than they are intitled to by the common law. The most eligible mode of putting them in possession, of their legal and natural right, may be a question of difficulty; but it is a question, that ought to be considered, with no other view, but to their happiness. The plan to be adopted, ought to be certain and speedy in its operation, without any consideration of the supposed, or even real interest, of their oppressors; and let it be remembered, that it is in the power of a small proportion of the people of England, to effect it, by refusing to receive the produce. The planters themselves would adopt it, were that the only means, by which they could find a sale at the British market: nor would the legislature be then harassed with preposterous claims for compensation; which however, un-

If ignorance and inattention may be pleaded as our excuse hitherto, yet that can be the case no longer. The subject has been four years before the public. Its dreadful wickedness has been fully proved. Every falshood, every deception with which it has been disguised, has been compleatly done away; and it stands before us in all its native horrors. No longer can it be pretended, that Africa is a barbarous uncultivated land, inhabited by a race of savages inferior to the rest of the human species. Mr. How, who was employed by government to go up the country, deposes, that the inland is every where well cultivated, abounding with rice, millet, potatoes, cotton, and indigo plantations, and that the inhabitants are quick in learning languages, and remarkable industrious, hospitable, and obliging. It appears that they possess noble and heroic minds, disdaining slavery, and frequently seeking refuge from it in the arms of death. Nor shall we hardly be again told, of the superior happiness they enjoy under the benevolent care of the planters, when Mr. Coor has deposed, that setting slaves to work in the morning, is attended with loud peals of whipping;---and General Tottenham, "That there is no comparison between regimental flogging, which only cuts the skin, and the plantation, which cuts out the flesh,"---and Capt. Hall, "That the punishments are very shocking, much more so than in men of war,"---and Capt. Smith, "That at every stroke of the whip a piece of flesh is cut out,"---and Mr. Ross, "that he considers a comparison between West India slaves and the British peasantry, as an insult to common sense."

The case now fully lies before us; and we have to make our choice, either to join ourselves with these manufacturers of human woe, or to renounce the horrid association. If we doubt the former, let us at least have the candour to avow our conduct in its real deformity. Let us no longer affect to deplore

which we are the primary cause: nor let us pretend to execrate the conduct of the slave-dealer, the slave-holder, or the slave-driver; but apologize for them as our partners in iniquity, and be assured, that if we now take our share in the transaction, we should, were we placed in a similar situation with them, with as little compunction take *theirs*; unless we can suppose the order of nature would be so far inverted, as that we should become virtuous, in proportion as the temptation to vice increased. Nor should we then, any more than now, be destitute of subterfuges to destroy the feelings of our minds, and the conviction of our consciences: with them we may pretend the inconsiderableness of our share in the evil, or that the crime does not necessarily attach, on our part of it: But were such excuses true as they are evidently false, yet would they not form a defence. It is sufficient that a scene of calamity and oppression exists, and that we have it in our power jointly with others to remedy it: and it is our duty to contribute *our* share, in hopes that others will *theirs*; and even supposing for a moment, that the calamities and oppression, had an existence from causes totally independent of us: nor indeed should we on many other occasions resort to such excuses; for instance,

Let us suppose, the Algerines should establish sugar plantations, that it was the interest of a body of men amongst us, that we should purchase sugar of the Algerines alone; and they should have influence sufficient with the legislature, to procure prohibitory duties to prevent our resorting to any other market than that of Algiers, and that in consequence we took the whole of their product. Let us suppose, that the Algerines should resort to the banks of the Thames for slaves, as the only place they dare insult with impunity; suppose our wives, our husbands, our children, our parents, our brethren, swept away, and the fruit of their labour produced with agonizing hearts and trembling hands.

landed at the port of London. What would be our conduct? should we say, sugar is a necessary of life. I cannot do without it; besides the quantity I use is but a small proportion, and though it is very criminal in the Algerines to enslave others, yet I am not bound to look to the nature or consequences of the transaction; and paying for the sugar I have a right to consume it, however it may be obtained. If such would be our language; such be our language on the present occasion; the only difference is, that our relationship to the enslaved is rather more remote, but in both cases they are our brethren. But it is hardly requisite to state so strong a case as that I have supposed, were only a Englishman to receive injuries that bore but the slightest resemblance to those daily committed in our islands, the whole nation would be inflamed with resentment, and clamorous to avenge the injury. And can our pride suggest to us, that the rights of men are limited to any nation, or to any colour? Or were any one to treat a fellow creature in this country as we do the unhappy Africans in the West-Indies; struck with horror, we should be zealous to deliver the oppressed, and punish the oppressor. Are then the offices of humanity and functions of justice to be circumscribed by geographical boundaries? Can reason, can conscience justify this contrast in our conduct, between our promptitude in the one case, and our torpor in the other? Mr. Addison justly observes, that "humanity to become estimable must be combined with justice!" But we seem to act as if we thought that the relief of our fellow-creatures, protection from injuries, communication of benefits, were works of supererogation to be granted or withheld, as caprice, or custom, or inclination may suggest.

We are now called on to redress evils in comparison with which all that exists in this nation sink beneath our notice, and the only sacrifice we are required to make in order to effect it is the aban-

showing of a luxury which habit alone can have rendered of importance. If we refuse, can we form the least pretence to a moral character? May it not be justly inferred, that those numerous displays of humanity, of which this kingdom boasts, have not their foundation in any virtuous or valuable principle, but that from custom and ostentation they derive their origin? But if our execration of the slave trade be any thing more than mere declamation against crimes we are put in a situation to commit, we shall instead of being solicitous to find despicable distinction to justify our conduct, abhor the idea of contributing, in the least degree to such scenes of misery.

Hardened by habit, the mind is with difficulty accessible to the convictions of guilt. Our actions are not easily influenced by the force of moral principle, when counteracted by custom and the grossest violations of duty may be practised without compunction, when sanctioned by the conduct of our associates; such situations, are more peculiarly the test of our virtue, and in such situations it is more peculiarly incumbent on us, to investigate our conduct with the most anxious solicitude, and guarded suspicion; and to fortify our minds with the force of moral principle, or the sanctions of religion. In proportion as we are under their influence, we shall not only refuse to do any act which tends to the injury of the unhappy Africans, but exert ourselves to the utmost, in our respective situations, to extricate them from their calamities. For the consequence of our conduct may not be limited by its immediate effect. Our example, our admonitions, our influence may produce remote ones, of which we can form no estimate; and which after having done our duty, must be submitted to Him who governs all things after the counsel of his own will.